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WAR FOOD ADMINISTRATION
Office of Distribution
Western Union Building
Atlanta 3, Georgia

SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM FOR 1943-44

School lunches will be available this school year to approximately 5 million American children--many of whom have mothers working in war plants--under a lunch program designed to maintain their wartime diets at an adequate level.

The 1943-44 program is aimed at protecting children's health despite dislocations in home life necessitated by the war and shortages of some foods. While Federal funds will finance a substantial part of the program, lunch projects are basically a community undertaking, relying on local initiative, administration, and sponsorship.

Local sponsors will organize the lunch programs, purchase the food from local merchants and farmers, and be reimbursed by the Food Distribution Administration--up to specified amounts--for the cost of the foods thus served. A wide variety of nutritious products are on the "reimbursable list," including fruit, vegetables, milk, and meat.

This differs from the school lunch program in which the Department of Agriculture has cooperated since 1935. In previous years foods were purchased directly by the Department and distributed to schools through state welfare agencies. The buying this year will be done locally by the sponsors, primarily to simplify the program and to conserve transportation and storage facilities that are required under the centralized distribution plan. The new plan for purchasing has been in effect in almost all States since last January, when it was first authorized. Experience gained by WFA during these months has set the pattern to be followed as this type of program begins operation on a larger scale.

"In the immediate period ahead when we are facing shortages of some foods, we need to make doubly sure that children are not overlooked," said Roy F. Hendrickson, Director of the Food Distribution Administration. "The health of the Nation's children is a resource which warrants special protection, and we can best provide this protection by making sure that children's nutritional needs are met," he said. Mr. Hendrickson explained that Congress recognized this when it authorized the expenditure of up to fifty million dollars to carry on the School Lunch Program during the coming school year.

Funds are available to schools and child care centers in the States principally on the basis of State school enrollment and the State's past participation in the School Lunch Programs.

While under the new plan the Government will pay approximately 60 percent of the food cost, the equipment, labor, and supervision must be furnished by State and local agencies or civic groups.

Under the new program, which combines school lunch and school milk projects, foods going into three types of lunches will be paid for by WFA at rates ranging from two to nine cents for each meal, depending on the type served. Type A is a complete lunch including all of the items necessary for a balanced meal. Type B has

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smaller portions of these same foods and is less adequate nutritionally. Type C is a half pint of milk, with WFA reimbursing sponsors at the rate of two cents for each half pint.

Foods listed in the agreement under which WFA reimburses sponsors are: milk and cheese; fresh and dried fruit; fresh and processed vegetables; fresh meat and poultry; eggs; dry beans and peas; soybean products; peanuts and peanut butter; oleomargarine with added Vitamin A, butter, lard and other edible fats and oils; cereals. Schools and child care centers receive ration stamps for rationed foods on this list under Office of Price Administration stamp allowances for "institutional users."

WFA officials point out that the program is not limited to low income children because the lunch must be offered to all children in the school. It is desirable, however, to give assistance first to those schools where greatest need exists, since available funds may not be adequate to help all schools asking for Federal aid. Though the national income is at an all-time high, many families still lack sufficient income to provide their children with adequate diets, and higher food prices and relative scarcity of certain important foods increase these difficulties.

In the States of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee, the State Departments of Education are sponsoring the program in the public schools. The War Food Administration will sign agreements with these Departments for the supervision of local or county programs in the public school system. Private schools, parochial schools, child care centers, and other institutions eligible for participation in the program should communicate with the District Representative of the WFA in their State. In Mississippi and Virginia, county and city school systems must enter into individual agreements with the State office of WFA since the State Department of Education is not itself acting as sponsor of a state-wide program.

Any non-profit organization is eligible to be a sponsor of a lunch program in non-public schools in the States where the State Department of Education is sponsoring the program or in any schools, public or private, in other States. In any State, such non-profit organizations may act as co-sponsors and furnish help to the school program. Such help is badly needed in many schools, both financial aid and assistance in preparing and serving the meals. There is no better civic enterprise for school boards, American Legion posts, religious groups, nutrition committees, Parent-Teacher Associations, Rotary, Kiwanis, Optimist, and similar civic and service groups to sponsor.

Sponsors sign an agreement with WFA which guarantees reimbursement of the purchase cost of designated foods used in the program up to the specified maximum rate allowed for the type of meal served. Under the agreement, lunches or milk must be offered free to all children unable to pay, with no distinction made between those who pay and those who do not. Another condition stipulates that the prices charged for lunches must not result in profit. Any surplus funds must be put back into the project in the form of improved meals, lower prices to the children, or more free lunches. To facilitate reimbursement, sponsors must file a simple form once a month with the WFA office.